



New lab offers cutting edge technology for DEQ and Louisiana  
page 8

## LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Galvez Building  
602 N. Fifth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802  
Phone: (225) 219-3953 Fax: (225) 219-3971

State of Louisiana  
**Kathleen Babineaux Blanco**  
Governor

### DEQ EXECUTIVE STAFF

**Mike D. McDaniel, Ph.D.**  
Secretary

**Karen Gautreaux**

Deputy Secretary

**Cy Buchert**

Undersecretary

Office of Management and Finance

**Harold Leggett, Ph.D.**

Assistant Secretary

Office of Environmental Compliance

**Wilbert Jordan**

Assistant Secretary

Office of Environmental Assessment

**Chuck Carr Brown, Ph.D.**

Assistant Secretary

Office of Environmental Services

**Herman Robinson**

Executive Counsel

**Darin Mann**

Press Secretary

### PUBLICATION STAFF

**Rodney Mallett**

Director of Communications

**Jean Kelly**

Public Information Officer

**Tiffany Dickerson**

Public Information Officer

**Jennifer Wilson**

Graphic Designer

**Josh Carroll**

Graphic Designer

Stories, photos and layout by the  
Communications Section.

[www.deq.louisiana.gov](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov)

**ON THE COVER:** Luis Siso, Environmental Scientist, Melvin Mitchell, Laboratory Services Administrator and Kodi Collins, student worker discuss lab results in DEQ's extraction lab.

This document was published at a total cost of \$0.77 per copy for 4,500 copies, including all printings, by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 4301, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4301, to provide the public with environmental information in accordance with La.R.S.30:2011, using standards for printing by state agencies established pursuant to La.R.S.43:31.

Notice to Readers: The Louisiana Environmental Update is published 4 times each year by the State of Louisiana, Department of Environmental Quality, to provide news and information of interest to the residents of Louisiana. Upon request, individuals or groups with 25 or more members will be placed on the mailing list of the Louisiana Environmental Update. If you wish to receive copies of this publication by mail, please contact the Communications Section at (225) 219-3960 or e-mail or write to the addresses provided above.

Printed on recycled paper. ♻️

# MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY



**Mike McDaniel**  
Secretary

As we move through spring and into summer, the pace of activities here at DEQ has noticeably picked up. Although I've not seen a slow period, we are undeniably entering the busiest time of year for our agency.

The legislature, which is in session, brings its usual demands and, once again, our legislative support team is doing a great job in informing and guiding us through the process. We have entered into the summer ozone season with all the challenges it brings. Our staff has done a superb job of planning and preparation. This year will be particularly challenging. We will have a considerable increase in monitoring activities by Baton Rouge area industries, the introduction of new technologies and the expansion of emissions research to include rail, barge and pipeline sources.

DEQ has launched a number of new initiatives. These include:

- Governor Blanco's Mercury Reduction Initiative
- Governor Blanco's Clean Water Goals
- Customer Service Improvements
- Environmental Justice
- Master Farmer
- Regional Services Delivery
- Small Community Compliance Assistance
- Capital Area Rapid Emergency Response System
- Website Upgrade
- Workforce Development

We are employing some new, innovative measures in our surveillance and enforcement efforts including expedited penalties, circuit rider and underground storage tank schools. We continue

with an aggressive effort in environmental education and public outreach.

There will be a busy schedule ahead for rulemaking this year. DEQ's New Source Review rules will be proposed shortly and we are initiating planning efforts for updating solid wastes and air toxics rules. We will also be crafting rules for groundwater certification, which has been previously implemented as guidance only. EPA recently issued the Clean Air Interstate Rule and the Clean Air Mercury Rule. By Sept. 2006, DEQ will draft new rules and State Implementation Plans for control of a number of air pollutants from power plant emissions.

We issued a new ethics policy for DEQ that emphasizes the importance of ethics and integrity in all our operations. We will also be implementing a new department logo throughout the agency. We recently completed a Website focus group study of our various users and this summer we will have a redesign of DEQ's Website based upon the feedback from our customers.

In the midst of all the planning and efforts going into our initiatives, we were stunned in early May when Undersecretary Cy Buchert suffered a stroke while at work. I am happy to report that Cy's recovery seems to be progressing very well, and I want to thank all those who have helped cover Cy's responsibilities in his absence. Out of this tragedy, there is a very important message I'd like to leave with you. The outcome of a stroke is often determined by the time it takes to recognize the symptoms and get the victim the proper emergency care. Cy's outcome was undoubtedly improved because someone recognized there was a problem and called immediately for an ambulance. There are several online resources you may want to consider such as [www.americanstrokeassociation.com](http://www.americanstrokeassociation.com) or [www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org) to learn the common symptoms for strokes so that you can react appropriately and, perhaps, save someone's life.

Secretary McDaniel recently visited Errol Lounsberry's (left) rice and crawfish farm. As part of the Master Farmer program, Lounsberry will conduct water monitoring at his farm to determine nutrient runoff as well as suspended and dissolved solids. Completion of the Master Farmer program requires attending a classroom session on best management practices and attendance of a field day at a Model Farm. The final phase requires the farmers in the program to write and implement a conservation plan for their farms.



# HOT FOR HYBRIDS

## Gas-electric Honda Civics boost agency's vehicle fleet

Purchasing a car that would help the environment was an obvious choice for DEQ Secretary Mike McDaniel. "As the founding member of the Greater Baton Clean Cities Coalition, which promotes clean, alternate fuels and vehicles, I felt I should walk the walk," McDaniel said.

McDaniel is the proud owner of a sky blue Honda Civic Hybrid. "Usually there is a waiting list for the new hybrids, but I got lucky and found one on the lot of a local dealer," he said. Honda is one of a number of automobile manufacturers now making gas-electric hybrid vehicles.

For nearly a century, the United States transportation sector has used petroleum-based fuels and internal combustion engines for almost 100 percent of its vehicles, but that is now changing. Hybrid cars are hitting the mainstream. DEQ recently added two Civic Hybrids to its vehicle fleet with an additional two on order. "As stewards of the environment, I think it is important for the state to demonstrate the benefits of these types of vehicles," McDaniel said.

The gas-electric hybrid vehicles reduce emissions through greater fuel efficiency and an effective emissions control system. "There have been remarkable advancements in vehicle technology. The Hybrids produce significantly lower emissions of ozone-forming nitrogen oxides, carbon dioxide and other pollutants related to regular, gas-powered vehicles," said McDaniel.

The Honda hybrid pairs a super-efficient gasoline engine with a lightweight, high-output electric motor. The Hybrid has garnered many accolades such as achieving the highest fuel



[above] DEQ added these two gas-electric hybrids to its vehicles. [below] These hybrids are equipped with a dashboard gauge that measures the amount of charge for their electric motors.

efficiency in its class. It can carry five people and travel 650 miles on one fill-up, according to Honda. "It is not an 'electric car' so at no point do you ever plug it in," said McDaniel. The gasoline engine does the charging, with occasional help from mother-nature in the form of gravity or momentum to add to the battery's functionality. "The almost 50-miles-per-gallon gas mileage is particularly helpful for my commuting," McDaniel said.

Gas-electric hybrids have come a long way from their unconventional structural designs just a few years ago. You can hardly distinguish them from their counterparts, except for the Hybrid tag prominently featured in the rear. Currently the Internal Revenue Service has approved five Hybrids models if purchased new to qualify for a one-time federal income tax deduction. The "clean fuel tax" is \$2,000 if purchased this year or \$500 next year. Car makers will introduce more than 15 new models in the next few years.

If you're not ready to purchase a hybrid there are other alternatives. According to EPA, buying a vehicle with high fuel economy will help save

money, help the environment and reduce our reliance on imported oil. Federal law requires automobile manufacturers to determine the fuel economy of new vehicles offered for sale in the U.S.

This information is generally provided on a fuel economy label affixed to each vehicle's window to help consumers make informed decisions regarding fuel economy when purchasing a new vehicle. While these labels may vary somewhat in appearance, they must all provide the same information.

According to EPA, choosing a vehicle that gets 25 rather than 20 miles to the gallon will prevent 10 tons of carbon dioxide over the lifetime of your vehicle. Choosing the most fuel-efficient vehicle in a class could save you more than \$1,500 in gasoline costs and prevent more than 15 tons of greenhouse gas pollution over the lifetime of your vehicle.

With gas prices on the rise, people are starting to make decisions on what kind of vehicle to buy with gas prices and the environment in mind. Thus, the hybrids have recently gained in popularity.



# ON AIR: Ozone season opening prompts preparation

## All about OZONE

Ozone season runs from May 1 to Sept. 30. Each day of the season, the Air Analysis Section determines whether or not to issue an ozone alert for the following day. An ozone alert is provided as follows:

- If the air quality index forecast is green, yellow or orange, an alert is NOT issued.
- If the AQI forecast is red or maroon, an **OZONE ACTION DAY** is called. DEQ communications staff will then notify the Ozone Action Coordinators, the public and the media.

An ozone alert is issued by 2:00 p.m., and signals the public and industries to take preventive steps to lower potential ozone levels.

If an **OZONE ACTION DAY** is issued, you can help by:

- Fueling and mowing after 6 p.m.
- Biking instead of driving
- Carpooling
- Taking public transportation
- Bringing your lunch
- Spreading the word



Ozone Hotline: 225-219-0857

AQI Hotline: 225-219-3543

[www.deq.louisiana.gov](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov)

[www.epa.gov/airnow/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/airnow/index.html)

The five-parish Baton Rouge nonattainment area is on alert again for high ozone days. While the majority of the state meets federal standards for ozone, East and West Baton Rouge, Livingston, Ascension and Iberville parishes are still trying to reach attainment.

Ozone is a lung irritant that is formed when the pollutants nitrogen oxides, known as NOx, and volatile organic compounds, VOCs, "cook" on hot days. It's most prevalent during the summer months and can pose a health risk to people with respiratory issues.

DEQ held two important meetings to help inform citizens about ozone season and how everyone can pitch in to improve air quality. The first meeting was an ozone planning session with the media to help solidify communications. DEQ staff, newspaper, radio and TV reporters discussed the best way to communicate ozone and other air-quality issues.

The Ozone Action Coordinators meeting brought together coordinators from industry, state offices and local businesses to find the best way to spread the word about community responsibility in preventing ozone formation. The coordinators are responsible for alerting their coworkers about days when ozone formation is probable. Everyone can help improve air quality, and especially ozone issues, by taking small steps such as mowing, fueling and using gas powered engines after 6 p.m., taking their lunch to work, carpooling and driving less.

Other improvements in monitoring and communicating should help this year. Last year, DEQ administrative orders required

15 industries to install 22 new air monitors. These monitors will be sending more air data to the department and Baton Rouge-area industries. This information should give DEQ a better idea of what and where ozone-forming pollutants are coming from.

DEQ is purchasing the "HAWK" leak detection camera to use for locating leaks. It is infra-red technology that can see leaks that are invisible to the human eye. The new technology detects the leak but can't identify the individual components. When the leak is found, a regular fugitive emissions monitor can be used to tell what is leaking. More information can be found at [www.leaksurveysinc.com](http://www.leaksurveysinc.com). If you click on "real time" video you can see the HAWK technology in action.

Another step forward is the new NOx rule that took effect on May 1. Facilities in nine parishes in the Baton Rouge area are required to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions by

an average of 30 to 35 percent.

In June 2005, the one-hour ozone standard is scheduled to be revoked, leaving only the eight-hour standard in place. This will present some challenges in reporting ozone to the citizens.

There are many procedures still in place from last ozone season. After every ozone exceedance, a technical review team will look at the data and issue a report about 12 days later to explain what led to the exceedance. The early notification system of alerting industry and citizens when ozone is rising will continue. Ozone Action Days will be called when the DEQ air analysis section predicts a day that could have ozone in the red area of the Air Quality Index.

The DEQ website [www.deq.louisiana.gov](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov) has the AQI index for three days on the home page. There are links to the full reports and real-time data. Citizens can access the AQI by calling the DEQ hotline, 225-219-0857 or



Jean Kelly, Public Information Officer, tells Ozone Action Coordinators from industry and state agencies what is new for ozone season 2005.

# Executive staff begins open house tour



Secretary Mike McDaniel discusses new DEQ initiatives with a TV reporter from WWL channel 4 at the Southeast Regional office open house in New Orleans.

## DEQ Secretary speaks in New Orleans, Lafayette

In April, Secretary Mike McDaniel began a tour of Louisiana. McDaniel and his executive staff visited DEQ Regional Offices located in New Orleans and Lafayette. "Being accessible to the needs of the community is important," said McDaniel. The tours featured an open house atmosphere to allow for dialogue.

"It was a great opportunity to discuss Governor Blanco's goals and legislative agenda in addition to her environmental priorities set for DEQ," McDaniel said. He also gave a recap of his first year, update on programs, future initiatives and addressed local issues. Focus areas included ethics and integrity, openness in government, improved customer service and communications, environmental education, good management practices, along with teamwork and collaboration. McDaniel also answered questions from the attendees.

Several local dignitaries, citizens, industry representatives and DEQ staff attended the event.

DEQ open houses for Shreveport and Monroe were held in early June.

# Drinking Water Program continues to expand

The DEQ Drinking Water Protection Program is a success story on the road. The program started in Avoyelles Parish in 2003 and has expanded to Acadia, Vermillion, Natchitoches and St. Landry parishes.

The two most recent additions to the roster of parishes are Natchitoches in 2004 and St. Landry in 2005. The program, which is aimed at increasing public awareness about drinking water, is educating the communities about how to protect their own natural resources.

The Drinking Water Protection team, typically, would start with the local water systems. From there they visit the various schools to show kids how easily drinking water can be contaminated. The team also works closely with elected officials. A community meeting is set up so citizens can receive helpful drinking water tips and conservation information. Citizens of the local communities are encouraged to form a committee and then they take over the job of protecting their own water. The program is geared to help citizens take control of their environment and take an active role in ensuring clean drinking water for the future.

The program will move into Jefferson Davis Parish next with a community meeting scheduled for late July. Calcasieu Parish will follow with a meeting slated in late August. The theme of the program is to "Protect Your Drinking Water One Drop at a Time."

## Natchitoches, St. Landry added to list of participating parishes



St. Landry Drinking Water Protection committee members, from left to right: Flo Dupre, DEQ team member Jesse Means, Luke Deshotels, Mark LeBlanc and Angela Savoy.

# AWARDING EXCELLENCE

Each year DEQ recognizes several employees for demonstrated leadership, initiative and outstanding commitment to the mission of the department. The DEQ Awards Program was established in 1994 to honor employees annually. Employees are nominated for awards by fellow co-workers and/or outside customers and contacts.

There are eligibility requirements along with a period for submittal of nominations. A liaison is selected to ensure that the nomination process begins on time. The selection panel consists of previous winners and they serve to review nominations, conduct interviews and make selections without knowing the nominee names.

Presenters include the secretary of the department, executive staff members and nominators. The program consists of four award categories: Customer Service, Special Achievement by a Team, Employee of the Year and the Secretary's Award. All awards, except for the Secretary's, are selected by the secretary of the department.

The Customer Service Award is presented to employees of any job classification who provide their customers, co-workers, public and others with quality service and assistance. The winner of this award is consistently responsive to questions and makes special efforts

to fill requests. This award recognizes DEQ employees who unfailingly provide outstanding assistance and cooperation.

The Special Achievement by a Team Award is presented to a group of employees for outstanding job performance in a team effort completed during the eligibility period. A maximum of two team awards are given per year. Aside from being two or more individuals, the definition of team for this award is broad and may include persons representing a section or unit, persons representing multiple divisions or offices working on a special project or groups from a regional office.

The Employee of the Year Award is presented to an employee for outstanding job performance during the period of eligibility. It recognizes those facets of an employee's character and commitment that contribute to making them a valuable asset to the department. It is presented to one individual in the scientific/technical area and one in the administrative/support area per office per year to ensure that all jobs within the agency are considered. The recipient is chosen by the selection panel and the award is presented by the executive staff member of the office to which the winning employee is assigned.

The Secretary's Award is the highest award presented within the agency and is presented to an



[above] Winners of the Secretary's Award for a team was the AFS/Tempo Interface workgroup. From left to right in the back row, Victor Carney, Melissa Lantz, Secretary McDaniel, David Ferrand, Linda Hatter and Melvin Mitchell. From left to right in the front row, Kermit Wittenberg, Rene Mire, Timothy Bergeron and David Simmons. Not pictured are Jennifer Mouton, Jay Carney, Scott Fontenot, Chris Piehler, Jennifer Pelloat, Thomas Bickham, Jim Courville, Patsy Wilkerson and Betty Thibodeaux. [below] Jean Kelly, Public Information Officer, received the Secretary Award from Secretary McDaniel. Kelly also received Employee of the Year for the Office of the Secretary.

employee or team of employees for outstanding accomplishments and contributions. The recipient is selected and the award is presented by the secretary to an individual, a team, or both, but no more than two are presented each year.

This year's Secretary Award was presented to Jean Kelly, Public Information Officer. "The awards were a wonderful surprise. Thank you to everyone," said Kelly. Kelly was also presented with the Employee of the Year Award for the Office of the Secretary.



# DEQ earns EPA Corrective Action award

## Collaboration helps Region 6 become first in nation to reach environmental indicator goals

DEQ was recently presented with a Corrective Action plaque by US EPA Deputy Assistant Administrator Thomas Dunne at the EPA annual Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) National Corrective Action Conference held in Denver,

Colorado.

Louisiana was one of three states in Region 6 to reach its environmental indicator goals in two important areas of protecting human health and controlling contaminated groundwater. These accomplishments enabled Region 6

to be the first EPA Region in the nation to reach its environmental indicator goals. The environmental indicators are a national measure of progress toward the cleanup of high-priority sites.

The DEQ success is a result of collaborative work between DEQ and EPA employees to develop innovative ideas and tools to help reach these corrective action goals

as quickly and economically as possible.

The other Region 6 states recognized for meeting or exceeding both of their environmental indicator goals were Oklahoma and Texas. EPA Region 6 serves the south central portion of the United States and consist of Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas and 66 Tribes.

## Levy promotes education about position, program

# DEQ OMBUDSMAN

Ombudsman, which is Swedish in origin, means representative or agent of the people.

"The job of the ombudsman starts with the basic principle that the citizens of Louisiana have a right to good administration by government," said Nathan Levy, DEQ's Ombudsman. "I am the person that the public and employees can complain to when they feel we have not met these standards."

Nathan, a DEQ employee for more than 20 years, has worked in a variety of positions. He started out in New Orleans doing surveillance in the field for more than three years. He worked in ground water protection, permitting, enforcement, the asbestos and lead program and as manager of the stakeholder outreach section. All of these positions have given him a great working knowledge of the agency. His experience makes him uniquely qualified to develop the ombudsman position.

One problem he faces is no one knows what an ombudsman does and that DEQ has one. Nathan is taking steps to make the ombudsman more visible. He has created two brochures that give a clear picture of the services that the ombudsman can provide.

One brochure is called Ombudsman — A Citizen's Guide. It contains information on the role of the ombudsman — what can be complained about, how to file a complaint, how results are reached and how to make a complaint to him. The brochure includes a complaint form.

The How to File a Complaint brochure contains much of the same information but in a shorter form. The ombudsman will soon have a web page that will also make the Ombudsman more accessible and visible.

Just what is the role of an

ombudsman? here are two kinds: the classical ombudsman, who handles complaints outside the agency and gives a formal response; and, the organizational ombudsman, who handles internal complaints.

In his role as classical ombudsman, Nathan sees that the actions of the department are handled in an

impartial, fair and timely manner. He tries to protect every citizen's right to be heard before any final decision is made that may have an adverse impact.

"When I receive citizen complaints, I investigate them," Nathan said. "Sometimes the complaint makes us aware of

deficiencies in a policy, procedure, rule or behavior and we find an area where we can make an improvement. Sometimes the citizen just doesn't understand our processes, who to talk to or where to find information. In those cases, I help them find what they need and we recognize areas where we need to improve education and outreach."

What about internal complaints? The ombudsman provides a neutral, confidential, informal, independent and safe communications channel for employees. They can obtain assistance resolving work-related issues. An employee may not feel comfortable using the formal grievance process through Human Resources, but may want to disclose a policy or procedure violation or ethics issue. Discussions of this nature are strictly confidential.

"The challenging part of the job is to provide a true ombudsman program," said Nathan. "We can all work together to improve and safeguard the department's reputation and image and demonstrate our commitment to doing what is right."

**"We can all work together to improve and safeguard the department's reputation and image and demonstrate our commitment to doing what is right."**

**Nathan Levy**  
Ombudsman, DEQ



Nathan Levy, Ombudsman



*Ombudsman*  
A CITIZEN'S GUIDE

## NEW FACILITY COMBINES THREE LABS INTO ONE

# *Anatomy of a LAB*

When most folks hear the word laboratory, they generally think back to their seventh-grade science class. The experience of peering down a microscope, learning about the Periodic Table or dissecting frogs, however, that is not what goes on inside DEQ's new laboratory.

The 47,000-square-foot lab is equipped with state-of-the-art technology. The facility, located behind the Department of Transportation and Development, at 1209 Leesville Avenue in Baton Rouge, is home to more than 50 DEQ employees.

DEQ's Laboratory Services Division underwent several changes after the move. The consolidation, reorganization and relocation of three labs into the current site provides for greater efficiency. Previously, they were located in separate sites, two on GSRI Road and one on Jamestown Avenue in Baton Rouge.

The move required the transfer of more than 27 tons of lab and test support equipment along with employees' individual files and property. The lab, which became fully operational in December 2004, was also designed to accommodate expansion. "Having space and potential are far cries from what we had before," said Melvin "Mitch" Mitchell, Laboratory Services Administrator. "We have room to grow and the potential to take on additional staff and equipment," said Mitchell. "Although the lab

is considered the newest and largest state owned in Louisiana, it is arguably the most secure. Internal and external access controls, sample chain of custody procedures and active/passive security methods are second to none," said Mitchell.

"Methods and programs that were once outsourced because we were unable to process can now be handled here," said Mitchell. The lab will undergo additional modification to house new analytical testing procedures over the next two years. Because of the building size, it houses both the State Environmental Quality Analytical Labs and the Louisiana Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program staff. The lab also features the largest clean metals lab in the South.

While impressive in size and nature, the functions of the lab are made possible because of the staff. They perform a battery of analytical, research and evaluation of data collected from areas across the state. The staff uses various technology and equipment to accomplish their work. Current technology includes gas chromatography, gas chromatography/mass spectrometry, inductively

coupled plasma and inductively coupled plasma/mass spectrometry. Some of the current equipment includes titrators, analytical balances, spectrophotometers and colorimeters.

"Most of the staff members are cross trained and hold multiple degrees," said Mitchell. A requirement for an employee working in the lab includes a baccalaureate degree with a major in one of the following scientific fields: animal science, biological sciences, chemistry, geosciences, atmospheric sciences, soil sciences, physical geography, physics, health sciences, toxicology, environmental sciences, wildlife and fisheries sciences, engineering, nuclear science, agronomy, forestry, health physics, medical physics, or statistics and quantitative methods.

The quality of their work and commitment to the environment is demonstrated daily. Last year, staff sampled 87,280 items. All laboratory analysis work is done in compliance with federal and or state environmental regulations. However, staff continually strives to meet and exceed standards. The Analytical Products Group Inc. recognized the lab as a Laboratory of Excellence in 2004 for quality in proficiency testing. The lab achieved 100% acceptable data in a nationwide study which included 58 other labs. According to APG, the achievement was a demonstration of the superior quality of the lab in the evaluation of the analytes of 1,1-dichloroethene, cis-1,2-dichloroethene, total xylenes, 1,2,4-trichlorobenzene and styrene. These five hazardous substances are just a few of the many toxic pollutants analyzed by the lab staff. "This year we are projecting that the LDEQ Lab will conduct more than 95,000 sample analyses," said Mitchell.

"Many citizens are not aware of the vital role the lab plays in protecting public health and the environment," said Mitchell. During ozone season the lab staff analyzes more than 5,500 ambient air samples taken from 17 sites across the state. There are several health implications associated with ozone. For the most part, ozone and air pollution are invisible and cannot be detected by human senses. So it becomes important to determine what



“acceptable” concentrations are allowed to be protective. In 1990, DEQ was the first state to adopt air quality standards for toxic air pollutants. Currently, Louisiana is one of only two other states with standards which go above and beyond EPA’s air quality standards.

“We have several progressive goals planned for the lab,” said Mitchell. “A major goal is to have the entire lab fully accredited within two years by the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program. We want to open our doors to the citizens but more importantly to individuals who are grant recipients that may be seeking lab space to conduct research.”

Also on the horizon, the lab is gearing up to pioneer with academia. “The lab provides a unique environment to explore basic research functions,” Mitchell said.

“We want to partner with local universities and become an integral part of their curriculum, by providing internships, training and cooperative opportunities to Louisiana students through the new DEQ Workforce Development Program. By giving students an avenue to enhance their educational skills, we hope to attract and retain Louisiana’s brightest after graduation.”

The lab staff recently started this initiative by hosting students from St. James High School and

Nicholls State University. They had the opportunity to tour the various labs within the facility and learn about the procedures, methods and equipment used by DEQ employees.

“The lab and tour were very impressive. It was one of the best I have been to in over 17 years of teaching,” said Kermit Gauthreaux, St. James High School teacher. “As a group, these students were more interested and involved in the tour than any I

have had before. I believe that was caused by the enthusiasm and knowledge of the laboratory personnel and the state-of-the-art facilities. The students were so impressed that I received phone calls from their parents that evening to inquire about what college they should attend to be able to acquire a degree that would enable them to work in a facility such as DEQ’s laboratory. This was a first for me.”



[above] Members of DEQ’s surveillance team unload and submit samples and other data collected while out in the field that will be analyzed at the lab. [below] Elizabeth Kashefi, Environmental Scientist 3, talks to students from St. James High School about equipment in the organic extraction lab. [left] Lucy Tang, Environmental Scientist 3, gives a demonstration to St. James High School students in the inorganic general chemistry lab.



## Welcome to the Jungle: Visitors learn records management skills, tour Public Records, DEQ Library, GIS during annual celebration

Have you ever felt lost in an information jungle? Sorting through your e-mails, letters and other files can sometimes be overwhelming. DEQ's Records Management Section taught DEQ employees and the public the skills needed to manage these records during its annual Records and Information Management Month, also known as RIMM, celebration.

Each April, DEQ promotes the importance of good records and information management, as well as the value of openness in government and the public's right to know. Throughout the month DEQ offered tours, training sessions, exhibits and special contests to its employees and the public.

This year's RIMM theme was "Navigating the Information Jungle." The public was invited to participate in a presentation on the public participation process and toured sections of the department like the Public Records Center, Library, and Geographic Information Systems Center.

"The RIMM activities are part of an extensive effort to provide better customer service," said Secretary Mike McDaniel. "We are focusing on transparency and openness and want to be a valuable resource to our citizens. The tours and training are tools to accomplish the agency's mission of being more accessible to the needs and concerns of the public."

RIMM began in 1995 when the Association of Records Managers and Administrators Inc.

established the event to promote the records management profession and to emphasize the impact that records and information management has on business. To echo this message, Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco signed a proclamation declaring April 2005 as Records and Information Management Month in Louisiana and encouraged citizens to recognize the event.

Organizations such as Loyola University Law Library, Casino Rouge, Poynter Legislative Research Library, Baton Rouge Community College and students from Louisiana State University participated in the tours.

"We are constantly evolving and looking for ways to educate the community about records management. Making it easier for the citizens to access environmental information is a priority," said Wendy McLain, Records Manager.

The DEQ Public Records Center is located on the first floor of the Galvez Building. Staff is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. The public can search, retrieve, and view documents in the Electronic Document Management System, obtain Discharge Monitoring Report files and access original color and oversize documents. Public Records Request forms are available electronically and can be completed online. Completed forms can be submitted by fax, mail or in person. For more information, visit the Public Records website at [www.deq.louisiana.gov/pubRecords](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/pubRecords).



LASON Project Manager, Joy Ducre explains how documents are prepped for scanning in the Electronic Document Management System to participants of the RIMM public tour offered in April. More than 50 members of the public from LSU, Baton Rouge Community College, Casino Rouge and Poynter Legislative Research Library took part in the event.

## TERMS TO KNOW

### Agency Interest

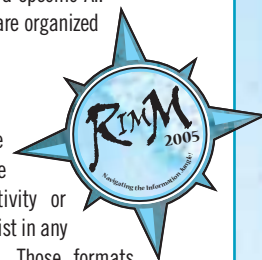
A regulated entity of interest on which the Department maintains information. An AI is anything that the department has a regulatory or other interest in. An AI can be an individual site, facility, portable source, area source, parish, person or organization.

### AI Number

Number assigned to a specific AI. At DEQ, our records are organized by AI number.

### Records

A record may be defined as evidence of a business activity or decision, and may exist in any reproducible format. Those formats can include paper documents, electronic files, photographs, video, etc.



### Records management

The systematic application of management techniques to the creation, utilization, maintenance, retention, preservation, and disposal of records for the purpose of reducing costs and improving efficiency of recordkeeping.

### Discharge Monitoring Report

Receipt of self-monitoring data is a key element of the Louisiana Pollution Discharge Elimination System program, and the DMR, contributes the majority of that information received from permitted facilities. The DMR is to be completed by each LPDES permittee to document the physical, chemical, and volume characteristics of its effluent discharge(s) as required by their wastewater discharge permit.

### Electronic Document Management System

The EDMS is DEQ's search tool and electronic library containing images of the paper documents previously filed in the 10 separate file rooms at DEQ.

### Inactive Records Center

The area within DEQ Headquarters used to maintain any backfile which requires further appraisal (i.e., incoming regional office "archived" files), as well as inactive administrative records, scanned records awaiting offsite delivery, DMR, and the Topic File Collection.

### Topic Files

Collection serves as the primary repository for records not specific to an AI. The collection documents the history and activities of the Agency.

# EPA trainer speaks on Environmental Justice

## Citizens attend, learn application procedures

Environmental justice, also known as EJ, means different things to different people. The definition is evolving daily.

EPA defines EJ as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. It will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.”

DEQ is taking steps to create a comprehensive program to deal with environmental justice issues.

One of the first steps was to join with EPA to have a training session that explained on how to apply for small grants for environmental-justice programs. EPA trainer Shirley Quinones spoke to a group of citizens from non-profit groups and explained the procedures required to apply for a grant. EPA has three

\$25,000 grants that will be awarded this summer for nonprofit community-based organizations. More than 30 citizens attended the session. To make it even more beneficial for those who attended, EPA and DEQ staff offered assistance in the application process.

DEQ also met with tribal governments later in March. Louisiana has four tribes: Jena Band of Choctaw Indians; Tunica-Biloxi Indians of Louisiana; Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana; and Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana. Representatives of the tribes met with EPA, DEQ and officials from the governor’s office to discuss resources, identify problems and look at tribal programs. The goal of this meeting was to develop partnerships and discuss opportunities for environmental protection through federal and state programs.

DEQ and EPA have discussed conducting Environmental Justice Listening Sessions around the state. These sessions would be structured to give citizens the opportunity to interact with both departments and to get their input on the regional



Shirley Quinones, EPA Region 6, talks to representatives of nonprofit organizations about how to apply for an environmental justice grant.

issues that impact their lives. DEQ is in the process of setting up a steering committee to help plan these sessions. The first listening session is projected for early August.

“We hope to get information at these sessions that will help the agency shape meaningful policy and take positive steps to improve agency activities such as permitting and enforcement,” said Dr. Chuck Carr Brown, Assistant Secretary for DEQ’s Office of Environmental Services.

In addition to getting input from citizens, DEQ hopes to present

information that will help citizens better understand the processes that are involved in conducting inspections, issuing permits and handling complaints. The department also hopes to educate people on how the agency operates and how to receive assistance from the department.

“We want to facilitate individuals’ interactions with the department,” said Brown. “The more people understand about our processes, the better prepared they are to participate in them.”

# Circuit Rider to expedite penalty

The Office of Environmental Compliance has started a new program to address the backlog of enforcement actions and to streamline the penalty process. The new program, called Circuit Rider, relies heavily on personnel in regional offices and headquarters working together.

Circuit Rider is when personnel from the headquarters’ enforcement and, on occasion, legal staffs go to the regional offices to discuss compliance issues with inspectors from that area. The regional inspectors can discuss referrals and cases with the Baton Rouge-based enforcement writers so everyone involved has a better understanding of what procedures are necessary to handle a case.

“In the past, the inspectors referred everything to headquarters,” said Jeff Nolan, Environmental Manager “There wasn’t the camaraderie that we are building now and there

## Relationship between regional offices and headquarters helps program reduce backlog of enforcement actions

wasn’t that much communications. Sometimes there were different interpretations of the regulations between the regional inspector and the enforcement writer. All of this, plus the volume of referrals was adding to a backlog of enforcement actions.”

However, with Circuit Rider, the communication lines have opened and the changes are noticeable.

“This is an excellent program,” said Robert Freeman, Acadiana Regional Office Manager in Lafayette. “It cuts down on the backlog because we can review activities together and explain what we think needs to be enforced and how. There’s good communication between us and the

enforcement writers and we can decide what needs to be handled in the regional offices or headquarters.”

Hal Leggett, Assistant Secretary of the Office of Environmental Compliance, is pleased with how the program is helping both the regional offices and headquarters.

“We’re getting a more consistent interpretation of the regulations,” Leggett said. “The quality of inspections is better and what we see when we get referrals are more consistent inspections. Everyone has strengths and areas that could be improved, and by working together we are using everyone’s talents to get better referrals and cut down on the enforcement backlog.”

# the Future of conservation

photos courtesy of Cynthia Kilpatrick



What makes the grass green? What is ozone? How do plants help the environment?

How does litter hurt us all? What lives in water?

**Kids are full of questions about the world around them.  
Where will they get the answers?**



Oil City students prepare greenhouses for the winter.

In Oil City, they can get the answers at school – a school that focuses on the world around them and helps them figure out how to make it better.

Four years ago Oil City Elementary Magnet School staff and faculty dedicated their educational focus to an environmental science theme. The school is the only elementary environmental science magnet in Louisiana. Because of this environmental focus, students, teachers and the community became more aware of the value of our natural resources and our responsibility to preserve these resources.

To encourage and prepare the teachers for the new focus, the entire faculty of Oil City Elementary received training in several nationally recognized environmental education programs. The staff and teachers embraced the methods of WOW! The Wonders of the Wetlands, Project Wet, Project Wild and Project Learning Tree with hands-on activities that provide the students with opportunities to investigate environmental issues. The school went even further in the pursuit of Project Learning Tree recognition by becoming a Project Learning Tree Certified School. Oil City Elementary Magnet School is now one of only four Project Learning

Tree Certified Schools in Louisiana. Recently, Brenda Smith, a fourth grade science teacher, was chosen Louisiana PLT Teacher of the Year for 2004-05.

Students in each grade focus class studies on themes centered around the environment. Kindergarten students begin their school years learning to “Be a Friend to Earth”, followed by Earth Cycles in first grade and continuing through forestry, aquaculture, horticulture, meteorology and habitats through the sixth grade. The interdisciplinary environmental programs are woven throughout the school day from physical education activities, to art and music. Students appear on Shreveport’s KTAL television station as Kidcasters after completing a meteorology unit in environmental enrichment. Each class visits Sci Port Discovery Center in Shreveport several times a year and uses the center as an extension of the classroom.

Hands-on truly becomes a part of daily learning with the maintenance of a butterfly garden, vegetable plots and flower beds around the school’s campus. Fourth grade students gather rose petals in the fall and then fashion them into sachet bags to take home for Christmas gifts. Sixth graders visit a nursing home in Vivian in December to sing carols and help

the elderly make bird feeders to hang in the trees around the home. Students maintain concrete planters with flowering annuals in downtown Oil City to beautify the downtown area. Fifth grade students participate in Star Base training at Barksdale Air Force Base and complete a "junior naturalist" program at Walter B. Jacobs Park in a 10-week program each spring. Sci Port Spring Science Academy, in partnership with LSU-Health Science Center-Shreveport, has a group of kindergarten through sixth-grade students complete an eight week health science course that encourages health careers.

The staff has partnerships with Sci-Port Discovery Center in Shreveport, Oil City Rotary, Coca Cola and Bass Life. These partnerships have helped fund projects from flower gardens at North Caddo Hospital to a covered classroom pavilion at Williams Park on Caddo Lake, complete with interpretive signs designed by fourth grade students. This pavilion allows teachers to take an entire class to Caddo Lake for activities and instruction. General Motors donated test kits which allow students to do on-site water quality testing on visits to Caddo Lake. A grant from Learn and Serve America has provided the school with funds to make many goals attainable. In 2003, the students in fourth grade earned national recognition from Learn and Serve America for completing more than 300 hours of community service.

Two science teachers completed training on watershed programs through Shreveport Green and General Motors. The entire faculty has annually attended the Louisiana Environmental Education Symposium. In 2003-04 the students participated in the Living Waters International Program which is committed to providing safe drinking water to people in developing countries. Oil City Elementary Magnet School successfully raised more than \$1,200 last year to provide fresh water for an African village. The experience of helping people in another country gave the students a global awareness of environmental needs.

Students are encouraged to participate in recycling newspaper, aluminum cans and plastic bottles, which they weigh and count as part of a monthly school competition. The school has raised more than \$1,800 to purchase playground equipment with the funds from recycling. Each year the 4-H club sponsors the telephone book recycling contest.

In January students recognize Arbor Day with a school-wide program and they also plant a tree. Earth Day is another annual celebration that all the children and parents enjoy. The school year closes with a nature festival which takes the place of the traditional field day activities. The nature festival theme for this year will be "Woodstock,"

in which the importance of forestry will be emphasized with games, songs, exhibits from area foresters and a school day full of environmental activities. An extended year, which begins in mid-August and ends in late June, allows students the advantage of more time for fun and learning.

The results of this program have produced great academic growth in national and state standardized tests. The enrollment has more than doubled with the new magnet focus. In December 2004, the school was recognized by the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry for being one of the Top 10 Most Improved Schools in Louisiana. In 1998-99, when the state first began to assign School Performance Scores, the school was 40.4. They now have improved to an 89.0. Other grades scored higher than the state or parish average on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

The 2004-05 school year has been a successful one for Oil City. The former football field is now being transformed into a nature-exercise trail. Brenda Smith wrote and received a Learn and Serve America grant that will provide an asphalt trail around the field. The nature trail will have

learning stations located around the outside perimeter with interpretative signs designed by students to use in environmental activities. A grant from AEP-Swepco and assistance from Shreveport Green provided 34 trees native to Louisiana that were planted along the trail on Arbor Day. The trees will change the landscape of the field in years to come. In February the school was awarded a grant from the office of state Senator Lydia Jackson to be used to complete the nature trail. The school is looking for opportunities that will allow them to fully utilize a greenhouse donated by the Oil City Rotary Club.

The staff and faculty continue to search for innovative methods to enrich and expand the program. Every effort is being made by teachers and staff to make the Oil City Elementary Magnet School a meaningful experience for all students.

This kind of innovative environmental training will produce adults who are able to care for the world around them.

*Contributing writer – Cynthia Kilpatrick – Oil City Elementary Magnet School Environmental Science Specialist*



Students prepare to set interpretative signs at Earl Williamson Park on Caddo Lake. The students had the help of workers from Caddo Parks and Recreation.



## BIRDS OF A FEATHER

## Wetland Watchers aid troubled pelican

The water quality learning group of the Hurst Middle School Wetland watchers had quite a surprise at a recent outing. The students were on a service-learning trip doing water testing when all of a sudden a large juvenile brown pelican made a wobbly landing in their midst.

Hurst teacher Barry Guillot noticed as the bird waddled around. Both of its wings were entangled with fishing line and it had a hook embedded in one wing. Guillot called Wildlife and Fisheries and the Audubon Institute to come and rescue the bird. They cut away the fishing line but the bird didn't leave so they took him to a veterinarian. He was kept at the zoo for three days before letting him go at Lake Ponchartrain. Many brown pelicans spend winter at the lake.

"One of the parents asked me if this was staged because it was such a perfect learning opportunity," Guillot said.

The Wetland Watchers held their annual Wetland Celebration on April 21. Fifth graders from Luling Elementary, St. Rose Elementary and Schoeffner Elementary rotated through exhibits and activities that included more than 20 interactive displays, living history presentations, fish printing and hands-on activities with baby alligators and many other reptiles.



photos courtesy of Barry Guillot

## WETLAND WATCHERS REACH OUT

DEQ Southeast Regional Office employees attended the Wetland Watchers Outreach program. [right] Stephanie Morel and Kimberly Hamilton with DEQ Environmental Assessment use a sediment table to teach St. Charles Parish students about the processes that developed and shape our coast. The students are asked to observe how the sediment is distributed within the model as water transports it down slope. The students were entertained by violinist Amanda Shaw and enjoyed picnic lunches in the nice weather.



## NORTHEAST

On May 3, the Northeast Regional Office in Monroe held its first of what will become a monthly Compliance Outreach Meeting. The program is aimed at small operators who have a permit, but do not have resources to hire consultants, work during the day and are unavailable during business hours. The meetings are an opportunity for operators to discuss non-compliance issues and possible ways to regain a compliant status.

"These voluntary meeting are like one on one counseling session," said Kirk Cormier, Regional Manager. Most of the attendees had received a Notice of Deficiency letter that outlines the violations they have committed. They have 30 days to provide a written response to the letter.

"Most of these individuals have never had any dealings with environmental regulations or DEQ. Some are apprehensive and

concerned when they receive any kind of enforcement document," said Cormier.

The goal of the department is to work with them to achieve compliance as quickly and economically as possible. However, failure to resolve concerns are referred to DEQ's Enforcement Division and may result in orders, assessments and civil penalties.

"A dirt pit operator that attended was grateful for the assistance, he didn't know what to expect," said Cormier. "He now has a better understanding of the regulations and what must be done to be in compliance."

The meetings are scheduled the first Tuesday of each month at the West Monroe and Pineville offices. They are held from 6-8 p.m. The participation and scope of the meetings are expected to grow.

More operators have accepted the invitation. Northeast Region remediation personnel have also expressed an interest in utilizing these meetings to facilitate communication with responsible parties or

contractors involved in remediation activities.

## NORTHWEST

April and May have been busy months for the staff of the Northwest Regional Office in Shreveport.

DEQ employee Tom Hardaway, environmental scientist, taught a Zoology class at Bossier Parish Community College. He discussed the role of DEQ in protecting the environment.

Otis Randle, Regional Manager, Kathleen Duggan, Larry Lashley, Mark Chrisman, Jeremy Scriber, Tommy Perryman and Burns Doss set up and manned a booth at the National Safety Council Seminar in Shreveport. Chris Piehler, environmental scientist, gave a presentation about what to expect from a DEQ investigation.

Ronnie Kay, environmental scientist, continued the outreach efforts with a talk to some Girl Scouts about water quality.



DEQ volunteers, BASF staff and others help children from McMains Children's Developmental Center get ready for their annual canoe trip. The event was held at Tickfaw State Park, an area that is teeming with wildlife. During the trip, children and their families have a chance to see some of south Louisiana's unusual swamp life, while enjoying a relaxing canoe ride. Following the ride, families and volunteers enjoyed a jambalaya lunch provided by BASF and Chris Mayeux of DEQ.

Karen Jones of DEQ taught Roberta Spradley's Bernard Terrace Elementary third-grade class how to use recyclables to make jewelry. The children used everyday household items, recycled computer parts, old jewelry, and found items.



John Rogers, DEQ Recycling section, helps children build birdhouses at Greenwing. Greenwing was held at Waddell Outdoor Education Center. The event was sponsored by Ducks Unlimited.



Curt Auzenne and Karen Fisher-Brasher, DEQ Recycling section, show the children of Southside Elementary School how to make paper.